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Bonneville Power Administration

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PORTLAND, Ore. – The federal Columbia River Power System is ready for the year 2000, the Bonneville Power Administration, [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#) and the [U.S. Bureau of Reclamation](#) announced today.

"This is a milestone. If Jan. 1, 2000, were tomorrow, we are confident that BPA's part of the power system would continue to operate safely and reliably," said BPA's Chief Information Officer Joe O'Rourke.

BPA provides about 40 percent of the power consumed in the Pacific Northwest via the region's largest high-voltage transmission system. Local utilities connect with BPA power lines and deliver power to residential and commercial customers.

BPA has completed tests of its automated business systems and date-sensitive equipment for Y2K readiness. Where needed, equipment was replaced, repaired or re-programmed, then it was tested again. The power sold by BPA comes from the 29 federal hydroelectric dams owned and operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. The remainder of the power that BPA sells comes from the Northwest's only operating nuclear plant and other firm power purchases.

Ron Cook, Y2K Project Coordinator for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Northwestern Division office, said the Corps automated systems have undergone a complete inventory and assessment for Y2K readiness. "Our mission critical systems and facilities are fully Y2K compliant. Manual controls allow us to meet critical operational needs at our hydropower and flood control projects, navigation locks, and fish mitigation systems," said Cook.

The Bureau of Reclamation owns [Grand Coulee Dam](#), the nation's largest hydroelectric facility. Grand Coulee Dam alone produces enough electricity in one year to provide power for more than 2 million homes. Steve Clark, the acting regional director, said Reclamation has certified all mission-critical software systems, evaluated all embedded microchips and renovated or replaced those that were mission-critical but not compliant.

"We will continue preparing for Y2K by participating with others in Y2K drills as the year progresses," Clark said.

The [Washington Public Power Supply System's Plant 2](#) near Richland, Wash., will be Y2K ready by July 1 in compliance with a directive from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, according to Geoff Gelhaus the manager of Y2K readiness issues at Plant 2. NRC audited the Supply System's Y2K preparations in January to assess the progress of an in-depth program started more than two years ago. The audit team examined Plant 2's ability to meet industry standards, its readiness schedule and its contingency plans and came away pleased with the progress made.

The last of the plant modifications needed to make Plant 2 ready for the year 2000 will be made during a two-month maintenance outage scheduled to begin April 10.

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